

# Delaware celebrates Lights on Afterschool

Hundreds of children, families, business and community leaders will come together throughout the state and nation Thursday at Lights On Afterschool events to celebrate the achievements of afterschool students and draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs to serve children nationwide who are unsupervised and at risk each weekday afternoon. There are more than 8,000 Lights On Afterschool events across the nation emphasizing the importance of keeping the lights on and the doors open after school. Lights On Afterschool activities celebrate the many benefits of afterschool programs and encourage lawmakers, businesses, and others to support afterschool funding.

“I am grateful for the schools and community partners that work together throughout the school year to provide enriching activities in safe environments so our children can learn, grow and thrive after school,” Secretary of Education Susan Bunting said.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, Lights On Afterschool has been celebrated annually since 2000. This year, more than one million Americans will demonstrate their support for afterschool by taking part in the only nationwide celebration for afterschool programs.

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

A newly released national poll illustrates that the high level of support for afterschool shown by those joining Lights On Afterschool celebrations extends to the overall population. The poll found that nearly 9 out of 10 adults (89 percent) believe afterschool and summer programs are important to their communities. The poll also found strong backing of public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs, with 2 out of 3 adults surveyed saying they want their federal, state and local leaders to provide funding for afterschool and summer programs. Demand for afterschool programs continues to far outpace the supply of existing programs. More work needs to be done to meet the great need for afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

Many afterschool programs around the nation are supported by funding from the Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. Since its creation, it has provided funding to allow millions of children to attend afterschool.

Lights On Afterschool is organized by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs.

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